

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An item delivery system in which a public switched telephone network is used to make connection between a sender's terminal apparatus of a sender entrusting delivery of a delivery item to a delivery agency and a recipient's terminal apparatus of a recipient receiving the delivery item,

wherein the recipient's terminal apparatus obtains a public key of the delivery agency via a specified medium, uses the public key to encrypt recipient information containing at least recipient's private information needed for delivery of items and to generate recipient's encryption information, and transmits the recipient's encryption information to the sender's terminal apparatus;

wherein the sender's terminal apparatus outputs the transmitted recipient's encryption information in order to be attached to a delivery item entrusted to the delivery agency; and

wherein the delivery agency's cryptogram reader decrypts the output recipient's encryption information using the delivery agency's secret key so that the delivery agency obtains the recipient information.

2. The item delivery system according to claim 1, wherein the recipient's terminal apparatus attaches information about the delivery agency's public key to the recipient's encryption information and transmits it to the sender's terminal apparatus.

3. The item delivery system according to claim 1, wherein the sender's terminal apparatus obtains a public key of the delivery agency via a specified medium, uses the public key to encrypt sender information about a sender to generate sender's encryption information, and outputs the sender's encryption information to be attached to a delivery item entrusted to the delivery agency; and

wherein the delivery agency's cryptogram reader decrypts the output sender's encryption information using the delivery agency's secret key so that the delivery agency obtains the sender information.

4. The item delivery system according to claim 1, wherein the recipient's encryption information contains at least coded information.

5. The item delivery system according to claim 1, wherein an output of the recipient's encryption information contains at least a name identifying the recipient.

6. A delivery agency server apparatus of a delivery agency which delivers a delivery item entrusted by a sender to a recipient, wherein a public switched telephone network is used to make connection between a sender's terminal apparatus of the sender entrusting delivery of the delivery item to the delivery agency and a recipient's terminal apparatus of the recipient

receiving the delivery item, and the delivery agent server apparatus comprises:

a public key management means for managing a public key to execute an encryption program which encrypts recipient information containing at least recipient's private information needed for delivery of delivery items;

a public key transmission means for transmitting the public key to the recipient's terminal apparatus in response to a request from the recipient's terminal apparatus;

a secret key management means for managing a secret key to decrypt recipient's encryption information encrypted and generated by the encryption program using the public key from recipient information containing at least recipient's private information needed for delivery of delivery items; and

a secret key provision means for providing the secret key to a cryptogram reader which decrypts the recipient's encryption information.

7. The delivery agent server apparatus according to claim 6,

wherein the public key transmission means can transmit the public key to the sender's terminal apparatus in response to a request from the sender's terminal apparatus;

wherein the encryption program can use the public key to encrypt sender information about the sender and generate sender's encryption information; and

wherein the secret key can decrypt the sender's

encryption information.

8. The item delivery system according to claim 6, wherein an output of the recipient's encryption information contains at least a name identifying the recipient.

9. A cryptogram reader connectable to a delivery agency server apparatus of a delivery agency which delivers a delivery item entrusted by a sender to a recipient, wherein a public switched telephone network is used to make connection between a sender's terminal apparatus of the sender entrusting delivery of the delivery item to the delivery agency and a recipient's terminal apparatus of the recipient receiving the delivery item, and the cryptogram reader comprises:

a means for obtaining a secret key from a server apparatus in order to decrypt recipient's encryption information encrypted and generated from at least recipient information needed for delivery of delivery items by means of an encryption program using a public key of the delivery agency;

a means for reading the recipient's encryption information and decrypting it using the secret key; and

a means for outputting the decrypted recipient's encryption information as human-readable recipient information.

10. The cryptogram reader according to claim 9, wherein the cryptogram reader can decrypt sender's

encryption information as sender's private information encrypted by the encryption program using the public key; and wherein the cryptogram reader can output the encrypted sender's encryption information as human-readable sender information.

11. An item delivery method in which a public switched telephone network is used to make connection between a sender's terminal apparatus of a sender entrusting delivery of a delivery item to a delivery agency and a recipient's terminal apparatus of a recipient receiving the delivery item, the method comprising:

a step wherein the recipient's terminal apparatus obtains a public key of the delivery agency via a specified medium, uses the public key to encrypt recipient information containing at least recipient's private information needed for delivery of items and to generate recipient's encryption information, and transmits the recipient's encryption information to the sender's terminal apparatus;

a step wherein the sender's terminal apparatus outputs the transmitted recipient's encryption information in order to be attached to a delivery item entrusted to the delivery agency; and

a step wherein the delivery agency's cryptogram reader decrypts the output recipient's encryption information using the delivery agency's secret key so that the delivery agency obtains the recipient information.

12. The item delivery method according to claim 11, further comprising a step wherein the recipient's terminal apparatus attaches information about the delivery agency's public key to the recipient's encryption information and transmits it to the sender's terminal apparatus.

13. The item delivery method according to claim 11, further comprising:

a step wherein the sender's terminal apparatus obtains a public key of the delivery agency from the delivery agency server apparatus or via a specified medium, uses the public key to encrypt sender information about a sender to generate sender's encryption information, and outputs the sender's encryption information to be attached to a delivery item entrusted to the delivery agency; and

a step wherein the delivery agency's cryptogram reader decrypts the output sender's encryption information using the delivery agency's secret key so that the delivery agency obtains the sender information.

14. The item delivery method according to claim 11, wherein the recipient's encryption information comprises at least coded information.

15. The item delivery method according to claim 11, wherein an output of the recipient's encryption information

contains at least a name identifying the recipient.

16. A program for a computer of a delivery agency which delivers a delivery item entrusted by a sender to a recipient, wherein a public switched telephone network is used to make connection between a sender's terminal apparatus of the sender entrusting delivery of the delivery item to the delivery agency and a recipient's terminal apparatus of the recipient receiving the delivery item, and the program allows the computer to function as:

a public key management means for managing a public key to execute an encryption program which encrypts recipient information containing at least recipient's private information needed for delivery of delivery items;

a public key transmission means for transmitting the public key to the recipient's terminal apparatus in response to a request from the recipient's terminal apparatus;

a secret key management means for managing a secret key to decrypt recipient's encryption information encrypted and generated by the encryption program using the public key from recipient information containing at least recipient's private information needed for delivery of delivery items; and

a secret key provision means for providing the secret key to a cryptogram reader which decrypts the recipient's encryption information.

17. A computer-readable storage medium recording a

program for a computer of a delivery agency which delivers a delivery item entrusted by a sender to a recipient, wherein a public switched telephone network is used to make connection between a sender's terminal apparatus of the sender entrusting delivery of the delivery item to the delivery agency and a recipient's terminal apparatus of the recipient receiving the delivery item, and the program allows the computer to function as:

a public key management means for managing a public key to execute an encryption program which encrypts recipient information containing at least recipient's private information needed for delivery of delivery items;

a public key transmission means for transmitting the public key to the recipient's terminal apparatus in response to a request from the recipient's terminal apparatus;

a secret key management means for managing a secret key to decrypt recipient's encryption information encrypted and generated by the encryption program using the public key from recipient information containing at least recipient's private information needed for delivery of delivery items; and

a secret key provision means for providing the secret key to a cryptogram reader which decrypts the recipient's encryption information.